

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 DRC-01 /120 W

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R 221759Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1559

INFO AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 5486

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, BE

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENT ADOPTS PARTIAL REGIONALIZATION

REF: BRUSSELS 4063

1. CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES PASSED CONTROVERSIAL GOVERNMENT BILL ON PARTIAL REGIONALIZATION(SEE REFTEL) JULY 20 BEFORE RECESSING FOR SUMMER VACATION. VOTE WAS 108 IN FAVOR (GOVERNMENT PARTIES), 78 AGAINST (SOCIALISTS, COMMUNISTS, AND VOLKSUNIE) AND 13 ABSTENTIONS(FRANCOPHONE DEMOCRATIC FRONT AND BRUSSELS LIBERALS). BELL HAD PASSED SENATE WEEK EARLIER, WITH GOVERNMENT PARTIES MARSHALLING 99 VOTES AGAINST 57 OPPOSING VOTES OF SOCIALISTS AND VOLKSUNIE, WITH 10 FDF AND BRUSSELS LIBERALS ABSTAINING.

2. SOCIALISTS AND VOLKSUNIE VOICED HEATED OPPOSITION, WITH FORMER MAINTAINING THAT PARTIAL REGIONALIZATION IS MEANINGLESS AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL SINCE REGIONALIZATION FORESEEN BY CONSTITUTION, IN WHICH IMPORTANT MEASURE OF AUTONOMY WILL BE DEVOLVED TO REGIONAL BODIES, MUST BE ADOPTED BY TWO-THIRDS VOTE. VOLKSUNIE CRITICIZED MEASURE FOR NOT GOING FAR ENOUGH TOWARD FULL REGIONALIZATION. FDF, ON OTHER HAND, REMAINED BENEVOLENTLY NEUTRAL, THUS CHOOSING NOT TO DISTANCE ITSELF

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FURTHER FROM ITS RW ASSOCIATES IN GOVERNMENT.

3. STRONG OPPOSITION PRESENTED BY SOCIALISTS AND VU MAY WEAKEN CHANCES THAT COMPROMISE CAN BE REACHED IN FALL TO ENLARGE GOVERNMENT TO INCLUDE ONE OR BOTH OF THOSE PARTIES. AT ONE POINT IN DEBATE, HOWEVER, SOCIALISTS HELD OUT POSSIBILITY OF GIVING GOVERNMENT TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY IF IT WOULD DROP PARTIAL REGIONALIZATION MEASURE AND DIRECTLY PURSUE PERMANENT REGIONALIZATION. SOCIALIST LEADER, EX-ECONOMICS MINISTER WILLY CLAES, TOLD US JULY 17, MOREOVER, THAT HE THOUGHT CHANCES OF SOCIALISTS RETURNING TO GOVERNMENT LATER IN YEAR WERE GOOD IF ECONOMIC SITUATION DID NOT DETERIORATE.

4. NEW BILL ON PARTIAL REGIONALIZATION WILL CREATE REGIONAL COUNCIL, WITH POWER TO ADVISE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, IN EACH OF BELGIUM'S THREE REGIONS. THREE MINISTERIAL COUNCILS, MADE UP OF NATIONAL MINISTERS AND STATE SECRETARIES CONCERNED WITH REGIONAL AFFAIRS, WILL ALSO BE CREATED TO COORDINATE CONSULTATION WITH REGIONAL COUNCILS. PARTIAL REGIONALIZATION WILL NECESSITATE ENLARGEMENT OF GOVERNMENT, SINCE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE FOR BRUSSELS MUST INCLUDE TWO SECRETARIES OF STATE, ONE OF WHOM BELONGS TO LINGUISTIC GROUP OTHER THAN THAT OF MINISTER FOR BRUSSELS AFFAIRS, WHO WILL HEAD COMMITTEE. TO PRESERVE LINGUISTIC AND REGIONAL BALANCE IN TINDEMANS GOVERNMENT, AT LEAST TWO ADDITIONAL STATE SECRETARIES WILL BE APPOINTED TO CABINET. ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT CLEAR WHEN THESE APPOINTMENTS WILL BE MADE, ACTION IS NOT EXPECTED BEFORE SEPTEMBER.

5. DETAILS BY AIRGRAM. RENNER

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